



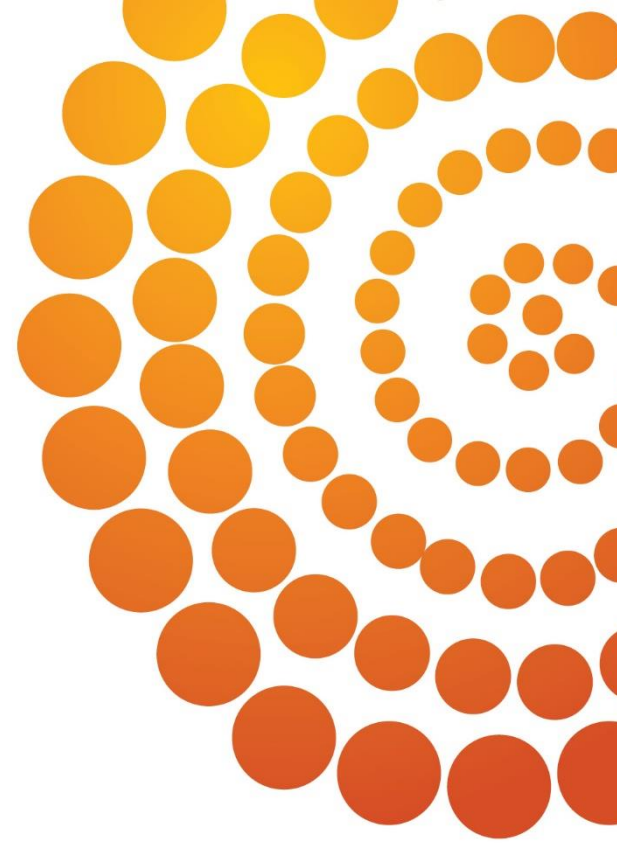
**Social
Firms**
Scotland

Briefing Paper

Halving the Disability Employment Gap: The role of Social Firms



COPE Ltd
Enterprising People



This Briefing

The aim of this briefing is to showcase how Social Firms can support Government's ambition to at least halve the disability employment gap by 2038. It profiles 5 Social Firms working in a variety of industry sectors, providing a range of services and support to people with disabilities. These case studies give a flavour of how our members increase the employability and crucially, the employment of disabled people.

Social Firms

A social enterprise (SE) is a business that trades to meet a social purpose (please see the [code](#), the voluntary code of practice for social enterprises in Scotland for more information).

A Social Firm is a specific type of social enterprise, its social mission is to create employment and meaningful work *within the enterprise* for people furthest from the labour market – in particular, people with a **disability (including mental ill health and learning disabilities)** a substance misuse issue, a prison record, a homelessness issue and young people.

Social Firms operate in many market sectors, offering an inclusive workplace environment – where people are valued for their abilities, encouraged to participate and supported to achieve. Contributing to social and economic inclusion, Social Firms can act as a stepping stone for some people on their way to open employment, or serve as the ultimate employment goal for others who may have difficulty retaining a job in a mainstream company.

This Briefing Paper focuses on Social Firms which specifically **create pathways to work and real jobs for people with disabilities**. Their success is based on a number of elements:

- Genuine person-centred support, flexible enough to adapt to an individual's unique circumstances, allowing them to progress at a pace they can sustain
- An asset-based approach that recognises an individual's abilities, aspirations, interests and motivations
- Local, specialist provision – with the trust of a community (of interest / location), able to build relationships with harder to reach individuals and better identify and address the root cause of barriers to work.
- Responsive to the needs of the local economy
- Longer term support for both the individual and the enterprise, to allow them to develop and adapt their service to ensure the best possible outcomes for people
- Added social and economic value – going the 'extra mile' to provide holistic support that people often require
- Social Firms, in particular, highlight how crucial a real work environment is and the positive difference it makes to an individual and their employability journey.

SE Strategy and Action Plan

The Social Enterprise Strategy 2016-2026 recognises that social enterprises are making a particular contribution to inclusive growth, a fairer Scotland and improving the lives of Scotland's citizens, including disabled people. It acknowledges the key role that social enterprises play in tackling inequalities; stating the sector has '*found ways to successfully reintegrate people with...disabilities into the labour market*' and highlighting the ability of social enterprise to '*unlock the full potential of people furthest from the labour market*'.

Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISE) exist mainly to improve the employability and employment prospects of people furthest from the labour market. The Strategy highlights '*The evidence now available tells us that collectively this already adds up to a very substantial contribution to volunteering, job creation, social inclusion, and employability in Scotland.*'

Under the 10-year Strategy, Scottish Government makes the following commitment: *We will step-up our support to Work Integration Social Enterprises. This includes finding creative ways to enable Social Firms to take on employees with higher support needs (including the use of targeted wage incentives) and to enable an expanded base of Supported Businesses to flourish commercially and sustain employment for disadvantaged and disabled people.*

Census

The Social Enterprise Census 2019 demonstrates the scale, reach, and contribution of social enterprises. It reveals the extent to which social enterprises actively work with and seek to extend opportunities to people often considered furthest from the labour market.

- 55% employ someone with a disability or long term health condition
- 69% provide training or support intended to improve employability
- 31% have 'providing training for employment' as one of their main organisational goals

Social enterprises often provide targets support for people with disabilities; the Census highlights that:

- 76% provide support to people with mental health problems
- 68% provide support to people with a learning disability
- 65% provide support to people with a physical disability

Policy Context

Disabled people make up 20% of Scotland's population, but only 11% of the workforce. The disability employment rate is just 43%, compared with 80% for non-disabled people.

Through the new National Performance Framework, Scottish Government aims to create a Scotland that supports all its people to flourish; a thriving economy driven by inclusive growth is seen as key to achieving this.

Government recognises that not everyone who wants to work currently has the opportunity to do so. To address the barriers and tackle inequalities for disabled people, Government is committed to halving the disability employment gap (the gap in 2016, the baseline year, was 37.4%). Their initial ambition is to increase the employment rate of disabled people to 50% by 2023 and to 60% by 2030.

[A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan](#) outlines the action Scottish Government will take to meet their ambition to at least halve the disability employment gap in Scotland by 2038. The plan sets out a number of key actions to be taken across Health, Education, Social Justice and Procurement and will evolve based on identified priorities of disabled people, the support needs of employers and labour market changes.

It will also align with other work to address inequality and deliver inclusive growth including the wider reform of employability services ([No One Left Behind: Review of Employability Services](#) 2018), the [Child Poverty Delivery Plan](#), [Gender Pay Gap Action Plan](#), and the forthcoming refresh of Keys to Life, Scotland's Learning Disability Strategy.

Social Firms: Their role in halving the Disability Employment Gap

There is significant potential for Social Firms, within a supportive and accessible employability landscape, to do more - to create more jobs and support more people with disabilities into employment, to help achieve Government's ambition to half the disability employment gap.

Social Firms are businesses that generate income through trade, however there are costs to providing person-centred support to people with complex needs and these costs are not able to be covered through their trading activity. The Social Enterprise Strategy acknowledges that the contribution of social enterprise remains fragile as *'by nurturing some of Scotland's most vulnerable individuals, they incur higher employee support costs, lower productivity and reduced profitability and that this situation is not always recognised or adequately compensated.'* Large numbers of Social Firms see themselves as operating out with or unable to access, mainstream employability programme funding. Even though they deliver significant employability and employment outcomes, they have to seek alternative sources of funding and/or generate income for their employability work. This is a real challenge to their sustainability, and some social firms/enterprises could cease to exist and vital services could be lost.

Social Firms recognise that for some people the real issue is social inclusion rather than employability, and that a focus on work integration should also be accompanied by a commitment to and focus on social integration.

Social Firms play a role in tackling the perception that some people with disabilities do not want to or cannot work or fulfil a role as well as a non-disabled person – this remains one of our biggest challenges. Following on from this, there is insufficient support for employers to consider employing a disabled person and many employers still remain reluctant or unable to offer opportunities to individuals that can fully meet their needs and aspirations. Social Firms have an important role to play here, working with employers to increase their understanding, knowledge and confidence in this area.

Social Firms Scotland: Our role

Social Firms Scotland is the national support agency for Social Firms and we operate as part of the wider social enterprise support landscape. We are a membership organisation and have been supporting, representing and serving the interests of our members since 2000.

We also facilitate the national Employability Social Enterprise Network (SEN), a wider network of social enterprises delivering employability support services, particularly for people furthest from the labour market. See www.socialfirms.org.uk to find out more.

Representation and Policy work is a key part of Social Firms Scotland's role and we take every opportunity to champion our members' work - campaigning for a policy environment that recognises the contribution of Social Firms. We work to ensure Social Firms are recognised, consulted and included as a cornerstone of the employability landscape.

We are involved in a number of relevant policy areas

- Since the launch of [A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan](#), we are fully supporting the commitment to invest up to £1m to establish a Public Social Partnership, involving government, disabled people's organisations and employers, to develop, test, and implement solutions to the barriers that employers face in hiring and retaining disabled people
- We continue to represent social enterprise interests and issues at the **Procurement Suppliers' Group**
- We sit on the Ministerial-chaired **Supported Business Advisory Group**, ensuring the interests of supported businesses are represented and linked to the wider social enterprise community
- The working group looking at **Disability Employment through the lens of social enterprise/supported business** has concluded with a number of recommendations being prepared for Employment Minister, Jamie Hepburn



Unity Enterprise run Spoon café, a city centre café, event space and catering provider in Glasgow. They welcome customers daily, offer a takeaway service and also provide hospitality support in the large on-site meeting room. Unity supports people from a variety of backgrounds, however it is mainly adults with learning disabilities that work within their Social Firm café.

Problem

- Extremely limited work experience opportunities, which are often tokenistic and brief. Employment rates for adults with learning disabilities sits around 6%.
- Perception is a powerful barrier – focusing on a person's 'needs' rather than their skills or the contribution they make. There is an assumption that they could not fulfil the role as well as non-disabled colleagues.
- Progression for people with a learning disability within the workplace is often limited and rarely includes formal training.
- For employers, sometimes the knowledge gap and support of the employer is greater than that of the employee

Impact

Notwithstanding their relatively small scale, Spoon Café makes a genuine difference to people. Anecdotal evidence shows increased confidence in many people who would otherwise not have felt able to explore types of work.

The benefits of being part of a team and contributing to the success of a business is immeasurable, and has an incredibly positive impact on issues such as social isolation and loneliness.

Solution

Unity is committed to the inclusion of everyone, normalising the presence of people with learning disabilities in the workplace. People are treated the same, have specific tasks/responsibilities, and are accountable for their own performance. Unity take a strengths-based approach, focusing on a person's skills and attributes. Supported work placements are time limited (usually not less than 16 weeks) and designed to support the person's longer term aim around employment.

Unity understand that not everyone wants to work in hospitality and so work hard to build partnerships to widen the options for people.

Result

A number of people are employed by Unity part time earning the living wage. Large numbers achieve a relevant qualification in their chosen discipline, and some move on from the café to voluntary roles elsewhere.

Increased communication, vocational and core skills has resulted in some employees providing on the job support to newer members of the team who lack experience of the equipment, systems and routine of the café – this shift in the power balance is extremely impactful.



Unity is a registered Scottish Charity who operate Spoon Café. Across the Charity, they support adults with a learning disability, young carers, and those affected by poverty, homelessness and isolation. Unity delivers a range of commissioned services supporting vulnerable people across Glasgow and West of Scotland. Spoon café does not receive any funding to provide employability support and so relies almost entirely on trade and therefore it is key that sales exceed expenditure.

Testimonial – Individuals

“I enjoy working here because I am one of the team”

“My favourite day? Pay day!”

“I like wearing my uniform and dealing with customers

Employee quotes

Testimonial – Customer

Regular customers see the skills and competence of Spoon’s staff, the inclusive nature of the café and the great customer service they’ve had (Trip Adviser reviews [here](#)).

“The food here is really amazing and the waiters here are really helpful. This is a great place to eat”

Trip Advisor review

Vision for Future

Unity is committed to creating opportunities for people with learning disabilities to realise their potential. Their Spoon café represents a model for positive and meaningful inclusion of everyone in the workplace. Their vision is a world where this is commonplace and so they believe they can contribute to this by scaling up in other locations and also by working with other employers to widen opportunities for people. Unity is ambitious and aspirational for the people they support.

What do you need?

A combination of funding resource and additional partners/collaborators to support our longer term aim to work with more people in other hospitality locations. Unity warmly welcome opportunities to collaborate with others who are like minded and share their values.

What advice would you give?

- ✓ Assume ability – always. In any other employment environment, people are taught to showcase their strengths, disability employment is adversely affected by a focus on weakness and need. In reality we all need support with some aspects of our work, whilst excelling in others. This is a basic principle, widely accepted but rarely applied in practice.
- ✓ Acknowledge the scale of what you can offer. Unity employ a relatively small team overall and this is reflected in the small number of people they are able to provide employment support to. However, this support and the person’s experience is meaningful to them and to Unity.



[Ucan-Learn.Work.Live](#) offers a wide range of training for individuals with support needs to develop skills for life (from independent living to employment skills). Their purpose built building has diverse facilities including a gym, training kitchen, IT hub, radio station and woodwork workshop. Ucan also creates opportunities through their small businesses such as landscape gardening and are an SQA approved training provider.

Problem

- Significant problems and barriers for people with disabilities (incl mental health) accessing employment and training.
- Employability programmes are often outcome-focused, triggering cherry picking behaviour from some providers.
- The employability pipeline does not always represent or easily support the journey of people furthest from the labour market.
- Employers lack support and can be reluctant to offer opportunities to individuals that require additional support.

Impact

People gain a sense of purpose and an opportunity to participate in activities/ experiences they would not ordinarily be able to. Increased independence, confidence and social inclusion, means that people have been able to reduce their care support package.

Ucan review their services with users every 25 weeks. Each year, they report their positive impact on an individual's overall well-being, achievement of personal targets and the wider impact on family/public agencies.

Solution

Ucan offers a range of training, work experience and employment in a real workplace for people with disabilities. Within a contextualised environment, Ucan provides supportive and flexible learning which builds on an individual's skills and abilities and offers them choice. They produce action plans that reflect an individual's goals and present them with realistic challenges. Additionally, Ucan form strong relationships with other parties to enable individuals to move on, in particular the Local Authority's Supported Employment team.

Result

In the past year, Ucan has seen 10 individuals go through their supported employment training, partially funded through the Local Authority; 7 of these are now employed within Ucan.

A number of individuals they support have moved on to Further Education or have successfully completed higher level training programmes.

On average Ucan works with 45 people, 5 days a week.



Ucan is a social enterprise and Company Limited by Guarantee. They support individuals with a learning disability; mental health issue; school groups; people in recovery and people with a conviction. Their main income is generated through Self Directed Support funding of social work placements; they also have contracts with Education. Other earned income comes from their landscape gardening and painting and decorating services.

Testimonial – Individual/Family

“I have come such a long way. I am now more independent and can do more for myself. I definitely feel happier, I’ve made lots of pals, I have a long term girlfriend and, thanks to Ucan, I now have a part time job doing what I enjoy”

Employee (former participant)

“As parents it has been rewarding watching our son grow as an individual with the support offered by Ucan”

Family member

Testimonial – Customer

“UCAN is a fantastic training centre, from the second you step in the door you are greeted with warm friendly staff and trainees who are clearly enjoying their time in centre. The various learning opportunities provided allow the trainees to grow confidence, develop essential life skills and feel challenged. Staff are patient and client centred with a real understanding of the client groups they engage with. I look forward to having UCAN meetings in my diary as visiting the centre is inspirational and never fails to make me smile!”

Job Coach – Supported Employment

Vision for Future

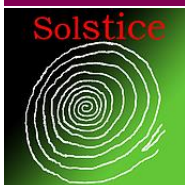
To expand the organisation’s provision and continue to develop employment opportunities for individuals through viable businesses. Currently re-developing a warehouse into a retail space and café to increase income and employment and work experience opportunities.

What do you need?

Support to boost Ucan’s profile and improve the marketing strategy.

What advice would you give?

- ✓ Don’t over stretch yourself or make promises you can’t keep.



Solstice is a wholesale horticultural nursery, with a small garden maintenance team. They work with people with mental health issues, providing training, qualifications and work experience to people with mental health issues to improve health and wellbeing, and to assist them to move forward towards employment or work related activity.

Problem

- 79% of people with long term mental health problems are not in employment and mental health is the dominant health problem of the working age.
- People transitioning from benefits into employment; and the difficulty of returning to benefits if employment does not sustain.
- Concerns about disclosing a mental health issue to employers and the perceived stigma. This is coupled with the lack of knowledge and support for employers (less than 40% of employers would employ someone with a mental health problem).

Impact

Participants report: improved confidence and self-esteem; increased social inclusion and sense of wellbeing; a healthier lifestyle; reduced use of other services and the ability to better manage their mental health.

People feel valued, as a member of the community and increase their resilience to engage in activities out with Solstice (recreational or employment). People gain a wealth of knowledge about plants and practical work experience, opening up a world of options and choice to them.

Solution

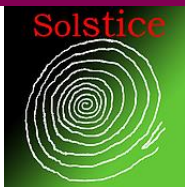
Providing flexible, longer term, person centred support for participants to rebuild their confidence and self-esteem. Offering the opportunity to increase skills and gain work experience to support a person's journey to employment is key. Solstice's 'can do' culture provides whole person support, supporting though life's oscillations and difficulties.

Solstice also works in close partnership with local employers, to support them to employ people with mental health issues.

Result

Participants gain SVQs in Amenity Horticulture alongside other certified qualifications.

Since opening in 2000, Solstice has successfully supported many of its participants into open paid employment. In addition a number of individuals have been supported to start their own gardening business; one of whom continues this part time and also works part time for the Beechgrove Garden. In addition, Solstice employs a previous participant who would have been unlikely to return to employment if not within a Social Firm.



Solstice is a Company Limited by Guarantee with a board of Directors who bring a wealth of knowledge, skills and lived experience to the Social Firm. It has multiple incomes streams – 97% of their turnover is earned income (referred placement income from local authorities, and the sale of plants and goods) with the remainder coming from grants and donations.

Testimonial – Participants

“Opened a whole new world”

“Closer to employment – gives a good feeling”

“Raised self-esteem and able to do more”

“Peace of mind for family”

“Now able to lead and train people”

“Gives people dignity”

“Safe space to encourage development”

Participant quotes/feedback

Testimonial – Customer

“Clients who have attended the service have had a fantastic experience there. For me the service offers continued support, both practical and emotional and offers a pastoral role of guidance and advice. The benefits to clients have been many – support, purpose and identity, education and knowledge, social inclusion and meaningful activity”

CPN Team Leader

“Thanks for the plants – customers have loved all the plants you sent saying they look healthy and well grown”

Customer, Garden Designer

Vision for Future

To continue to provide a high quality support service for people with mental health issues, alongside running a commercially successful wholesale garden/plant nursery. There are currently no plans to grow, believing if the organisation is too big, it may become too impersonal and the person-centred, holistic support that is so key to the organisation’s success could not be provided so effectively.

What do you need?

More accessible procurement and sustainable referral routes, particularly in the time of local authority budget cuts. Access to funding to support replacement of essential capital items.

What advice would you give?

- ✓ Do not put a (short) time limit on the length of time that people can attend a project or programme of support
- ✓ Make clear decisions on where priorities lie in terms of operating a commercial business alongside providing a high quality, valued support service



COPE provides employment and skills development for adults with learning disabilities or autism spectrum disorders. COPE produces and sells good and services through a range of business: Shetland Soap Company (soap and skincare); Shetlandeli (relish and chutney range); Shetland Kitchen Co (catering and sandwiches); Shetland Home Co (reuse and recycling centre); and Shetland Garden Co (garden centre).

Problem

- There are a lack of opportunities and jobs within mainstream employment for adults with learning disabilities or autism spectrum disorders
- Employers are reticent to offer employment to and fearful of the lack of support for people with additional support needs
- Social Firms are not able to access financial assistance to support the payment of wages in many instances
- Community Jobs Scotland places are limited and therefore cannot meet demand

Impact

COPE believes everyone, regardless of a disability, should have the opportunity to work if they so wish. They offer people a choice in career path, that they may not have been able to explore without access to COPE's businesses. The confidence of the people they support grow as they develop new skills and feel valued – both in themselves and by others.

COPE measure their social impact by assessing each person's employability skills development goals, and discussing their employability choices for the future

Solution

COPE is committed to giving people with disabilities the opportunity to participate in a supportive, inclusive work environment, free from stigma and discrimination. Recognising the lack of opportunities, COPE set up a number of businesses units to offer employment to people with learning disabilities. Everyone is valued for their abilities and are appropriately supported and encouraged to fully participate in all aspects of running our busy enterprises. Their range of businesses, enables COPE to offer choice to individuals and the option to try different roles/activities.

Result

As an ASDAN registered centre, COPE provides 100 employability training sessions per week across their 5 businesses and have achieved 11 [Workright awards](#) to date. COPE also employ 5 people with learning disabilities. Social Enterprise of the Year 2015 and winner of a SCLD National Award for employability in 2018, COPE continually assesses an individual's progress, tailoring their programme to improve core skills including: planning and organising; teamwork; communication skills; literacy and numeracy; self-awareness, confidence and decision- making.



COPE is a registered Scottish Charity and Company Limited by Guarantee. Their business units generate their own income through the sale of goods and services (55%), and a Service Level Agreement with Shetland Islands Council (30%), with only 15% of their income coming from grants.

Testimonial – Individual

I am 22 years old and work at COPE two mornings per week, one morning in the shop doing retail and one morning in production. I started from school in 2015 and have learnt so many skills since gaining a supported placement, I really enjoy working there. Originally I worked in the shop which helped me to grow my confidence, and learn shop skills. I have developed good communication skills, stock control and presentation, and enjoy helping customers in the shop, and I'm now confident to use the till independently. All these practical skills help me towards my goal of attaining an unsupported job in the wider community. Production is very different and to begin with I was quite anxious about it but the staff who support me were really encouraging and helped me to overcome this. I have learnt how to ensure the neat and tidy presentation of products are ready for sale. I really enjoy working as part of a team and have always felt accepted and included, everyone who works in at COPE is accepted for who and what they are. Everyone always arrives for work happy and the staff at COPE are really good at encouraging independence.

I've taken part in training opportunities such as manual handling and am working toward attaining my ASDAN Awards, to help me achieve my long term goal of getting a job. During a really bad experience in my personal life last year, the staff at COPE supported me to move on from it. I always feel that I can talk to staff if I need to and always feel I am listened to. The confidence I've gained through my job has given me the courage to explore and hopefully develop my art, and I'm shortly starting my NC in Art and Design at college, which is arranged around my job at COPE.

Vision for Future

COPE is looking to grow to be financially sustainable in the long term. At a local level they are looking to increase their social impact and at a national and international level to increase awareness of their social purpose, brand and businesses to increase sales.

What do you need?

Running a Social Firm is hard, as costs increase year on year and sustainability is always a challenge. Retail trading is currently tough and there is a constant need to respond to how people are buying their goods and services, with much more focus on an online presence. We need access to financial assistance to encourage employers to employ people with disabilities, aligned with the availability of appropriate support mechanisms to provide them with the confidence to do so.

What advice would you give?

- ✓ Be excellent at what you do
- ✓ Know your customer, develop good relationships with them
- ✓ Learn from others that have experience in what you are trying to achieve
- ✓ Be determined to grow your networks
- ✓ Take risks, be brave



Craig's Farm Community Development Project

(CFCDP) is a community centre bought back into community control, after a successful asset transfer from West Lothian Council. The building is designed to provide flexible space to meet community demand. In addition to the café, counselling room, office accommodation and events/meeting space, CFCDP delivers a range of projects providing opportunities for people to learn a new skill, meet new people and also volunteer.

Problem

- Difficulties in identifying and recruiting suitable candidates.
- Patchy and inconsistent support from employability agencies.
- Lack of whole person, wrap around support which can be essential for people with disabilities to sustain employment. For example, an employee suffers panic attacks and finds minimal support available,
- Difficulties in navigating their way through the Universal Credit system

Solution

CFCDP has a firm commitment, as part of their values base, to creating opportunities for people with disabilities/health problems. They currently provide employment for 9 people in various part time roles; 4 of whom have barriers to work. They also offer volunteer opportunities to local residents to increase confidence, social inclusion and employability. Their Hub Manager understands employability and ensures a person-centred approach and supportive environment for people.

Impact

CFCDP has an overall mission to enhance the social, economic and physical wellbeing of the local community. People working there report feeling better about themselves, valued by others and like they are making a real contribution to the community. They are also learning new skills – core and vocational – whilst also increasing with social networks

As a National Lottery Community Fund (formerly Big Lottery), CFCDP's impact is measured via formal evaluation.

Result

CFCDP has been trading for approximately 8 months, and has employed 4 new staff members. One is undertaking a Modern Apprenticeship with the local college supported by Enable. One employee came through Community Jobs Scotland, progressing from work placement to employee. They are also involved in the Career Ready programme, mentoring school leavers. A volunteer with anxiety issues has also recently been employed and is being supported through further training.



CFCDP is a registered charity running a social enterprise model. In their early start up stage, they received revenue funding from the National Lottery Community Fund. This funding reduces as their trading income increases and their target is to break even in 2 years (from March 2019).

Testimonial – Individual

“...I’m feeling about a 10 (happiness-wise) when I’m here. Very positive, close to the house and everyone is really nice. I think it’s going to help me get a job too as before I was just a stay at home dad”

Testimonial – Customer

“It has been a few years since the group had access to a gallery space within a suitable distance to members, and the art space within the new Craigsfarm building is an exciting opportunity for the group to showcase their talents within a vibrant and bustling space in the heart of West Lothian. The Art group is new and CFCDP would be a real boost to the individuals’ confidence to be able to display their art pieces. This will be their first exhibition. We have chosen Craigsfarm to exhibit in as it is a great location, very central and it has been newly decorated and re-furnished therefore bringing in brand new community members to not only the café but to the groups that run from there. Good footfall and a chance for the art work to be seen by many different ages.”

Vision for Future

CFCDP is working to break even within the next 18 months to 2 years. Its vision is to be a fully accessible venue and home to the community, responding to the needs of the local residents. CFCDP aims to ensure there is something for everyone whatever their age, interest or background.

What do you need?

CFCDP would benefit from support to improve strategic planning and stability and to develop a wider board with experience of social enterprise. In general funding should be more accessible for employability and there should be more holistic support for individuals with complex needs and barriers to work.

What advice would you give?

- ✓ Ensure start up is planned in detail and fully costed.
- ✓ Build up your support network – knowing who is available to provide support is vital.
- ✓ A commitment to the employment of people with disabilities is essential, alongside having a Board and staff team with diverse experience.

Social Firms play a key role in promoting equality, significantly contributing to social and economic inclusion, health improvement and improving people’s lives. Because Social Firms are businesses and earn a proportion of their income through trade, they are part of the solution to improving employability of and creating employment for people who experience significant barriers to work